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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 USNATO 000289

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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT: AUGUST 13, 2008

Classified By: Ambassador Kurt D. Volker for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C/NF) Summary: NATO Foreign Ministerial: Perm Reps welcomed the U.S. proposal to hold a NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels August 19 to discuss the implications of events in Georgia for NATO and the NATO-Russia relationship. Other topics were:

--Afghanistan: SHAPE reported the IED,s had become the weapon of choice of opposing militant forces (OMF) and ISAF had shifted focus to road security to ensure freedom of movement. The Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee urged Allies to increase their contributions to the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) to close the gap in requirements for Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs). He said NATO Military Authorities would complete an assessment in September of the additional training and resource requirements involved in the proposed increase of the ANA to 122,000. He also urged Allies to donate to the depleted NATO Trust Fund for transporting equipment donations since numerous donations, including three Mi-24 helicopters from the Czech Republic, cannot be transported to Afghanistan due to lack of funds. Assistant Secretary (A/SYG) Howard reported on his meeting last week with UN OCHA Director John Holmes in which they agreed to disagree over civilian casualty figures in Afghanistan, but agreed ISAF and UNAMA should work out a common methodology for counting civilian casualties.

-- Kosovo: SHAPE reported that KFOR is providing security at gates 1 and 31 and the UNMIK is working with Kosovo authorities to re-establish customs operations at those locations. The Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee said SACEUR will brief the NAC on September 3 and would like the Council to re-start work on revising the Balkans OPLAN after that meeting.

-- Georgia: The Czech Perm Rep, backed by the Baltic States, Poland, U.S., UK and Canada urged the NAC to respond quickly and positively to Georgia's eight requests for assistance. The German Perm Rep said NATO should take a step back and carefully consider the Georgians, requests. Ambassador Volker stressed that NATO needed to support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and respond as positively as possible to Georgia's requests. It was concluded that the Political Committee would continue its

work on the Georgian requests and a draft NATO statement with an eye to completing both by the August 19 ministerial. The Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee made a plea for Allies to share intelligence with NATO, which has no intelligence collection capability of its own, especially imagery.

-- Mauritania: The Deputy Secretary (D/SYG) provided a readout of his meeting with the Mauritanian Ambassador in Brussels on Monday, and noted that the NAC would have to make a decision in the near future on NATO's partnership with Mauritania following the military coup on August 6.

-- Budapest Defense Ministerial: Several Allies said they could not agree at this meeting to holding a NATO-Russia Council meeting at the October 9-10 NATO Defense Ministerial and several wanted to consider holding a NATO-Ukraine Commission meeting.

-- Operation Active Endeavor: Several nations (including the United States) objected to the participation of a Russian ship in Operation Active Endeavor, leading the D/SYG to conclude that in the absence of political approval the Russians would be informed the ship would not participate in the operation. Full readout of this discussion is provided septel. End Summary.

12. (C) NATO Foreign Ministerial: The D/SYG reported that the SYG had spoken to Secretary Rice the evening of August 12 and reacted favorably to her proposal to hold a NATO Foreign

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Ministerial in Brussels on August 19. Ambassador Volker said the purpose of the Ministerial would be to discuss the wider implications of events in Georgia for NATO and its relationship with Russia. Almost all Allies spoke in favor of the proposal, though a few said they would need formal instructions. The D/SYG said the proposal to hold a Ministerial on August 19 would be put under a silence procedure to expire at COB (it later passed silence).

13. (C) Afghanistan: SHAPE Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Policy BG Porter reported that the level of activity of Opposing Militant Forces, (OMF) across Afghanistan was higher than last year, which he attributed to increased ISAF and ANA OPTEMPO, and increased freedom of movement for the OMF in Pakistan. COMISAF had shifted forces to gain dominance over paved roads, which OMF has increasingly attacked, especially on parts of the Ring Road. He said improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are now the OMF weapon of choice and there had been a 43 percent increase in IEDs in 2008, mostly in Regional Commands South and East. The ANA and ISAF have been more successful in finding IEDs before they explode, however, due to improved training and tactics.

14. (C) BG Porter informed the Council that in Pakistan, operations by the Frontier Corps in the Swat district recommenced on July 29 and that clashes in the Bajaur Agency were ongoing. He said the ISAF supply routes through Pakistan remain open. Attacks along the Kabul-Kandahar road had put pressure on fuel supplies in RC-South, but supplies were now increasing and were in the green. Additionally, he cited the 4-star level August 19th Tripartite Commission meeting at Bagram Airfield as a key opportunity to engage the Pakistan military and build cooperation.

15. (C) BG Porter briefed that a number of operations were under way to secure roads within Afghanistan. In Regional Command North, the main effort is concentrated in the Pol-e-Komri, Kunduz areas. In Regional Command West, the main effort is in the Badghis Province to secure a newly established forward operating base. In Regional Command South, operations continue to secure the Ring Road and the 2/2 (U.S.) Infantry Battalion continues to integrated into ISAF operations. Also, the last turbine for the Kajaki Dam is scheduled to be delivered by October 31st. It will be

flown to Kandahar and then moved by ground. In Regional Command East, the first full Afghan National Army Corps level combined operation (Operation RAD U BARQ IV) is under way with three Afghan Brigades and four ISAF Battalions. In Regional Command Capital, planning is in the final stages for an August 31st transfer of security authority to the Afghans of the first district within Kabul City.

¶6. (C) The D/CMC informed Allies that by March of next year, NATO is on course to have only 53 Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) in Afghanistan against a requirement of ¶71. He urged Allies to increase their support for ANA training. He also informed the Council of a SHAPE tasking (to be completed in October) to assess Defense Minister Wardak's request to increase the size of the ANA to 122,000. Finally, he urged contributions to the depleted NATO Trust Fund for Equipping and Support of the Afghan National Army. He said a Czech contribution of 3 Mi-24 helicopters could not be transported to Afghanistan due to lack of funds and neither could numerous other donations. Total transportation costs would run approximately 3 million Euros.

¶7. (C) In response to a question from the Norwegian representative about civilian casualties, A/SYG for Operations Martin Howard reported that he had met last week in New York with UN U/SYG for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes to discuss civilian casualties in Afghanistan. Howard said they agreed to disagree on the civilian casualty figures OCHA had released, which Holmes said had been provided by UNAMA. Holmes had complained that ISAF was not being transparent with its civilian casualty figures, though Howard noted that

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ISAF had repeatedly requested UNAMA detail its methodology behind its civilian casualty figures, but had received no response. Howard said he and Holmes agreed that ISAF and UNAMA should work out a common methodology for counting civilian casualties. BG Porter stressed that COMISAF was committed to full transparency on civilian casualties and had recently issued a series of fragmentary orders designed to increase both the timeliness and transparency of ISAF's civilian casualty figures.

¶8. (C) The Belgian Perm Reps noted that much of the negative publicity about the security situation in Afghanistan comes from NGOs and their umbrella organizations and asked whether ISAF was in regular contact with them. He also asked whether the SHAPE assessment of the request to increase the size of the ANA will also examine the efficacy of such an increase. The D/CMC relied that the SHAPE assessment would also include such an analysis of the effect of the proposed increase and added that the ANA is at a tipping point where investments are paying great dividends. BG Porter said ISAF provided regular unclassified briefings to NGOs and their umbrella security organization about the security situation.

¶9. (C) Balkans: The D/SYG drew the Council's attention to UNMIK's announcement on August 11 that it would start its downsizing this week, approximately six weeks after the UN SYG's announcement of UNMIK reconfiguration. BG Porter reported that the situation in Kosovo remains calm, but low level incidents continue to contribute to a tense environment. He informed the Council that UNMIK is working with Kosovo authorities to re-establish customs services at Gates 1 and 31. In response to a Bulgarian inquiry, Porter said that KFOR currently maintains one platoon at each gate in support of UNMIK and there are plans to reinforce up to a battalion should there be a repeat of the February events when K-Serbs burned the two customs gates. Regarding KFOR's new tasks, Porter informed the Council that as the KPC stands down, former members are beginning to apply to the new Kosovo Security Force, even though some may not be able to join. He also said that the laws on the new security forces have not been approved by the Kosovo authorities, but that the naming of a new Kosovo Defense Minister should help accelerate the

decision making process. Porter welcomed contributions from nations to the two NATO trust funds (to stand down the KPC and stand up the KSF) and noted that more resources were needed.

¶10. (C) D/CMC again reminded Perm Reps that COMKFOR and SACEUR will brief the NAC on September 3 after which they would like the NAC to revisit the issue of revising the OPLAN. Ambassador Volker stressed the need to take advantage of the relative calm, which may be temporary, to make progress on UNMIK reconfiguration, EULEX deployment, and political guidance to the NATO military authorities. D/CMC strongly supported the U.S. remarks and noted, in response to a Dutch question regarding KFOR's response to a report of an establishment of a K-Serb checkpoint in northern Kosovo, the need for clear political guidance for the military authorities.

¶11. (C/NF) Georgia: France noted that the 27 EU Foreign Ministers were meeting that day to finalize conclusions on Georgia, which will then have to be implemented rapidly. The Czech Republic opened a lengthy discussion on Georgia, saying that NATO needed to respond quickly to Georgia's eight requests in the non-paper circulated yesterday. He said the NAC should respond positively to at least some of the Georgian requests, including sending senior NATO officials to Georgia and holding a meeting of the Military Committee (MC) with Georgia. He said the Political Committee, which is examining Georgia's requests, should be given clear guidance by the Council. He argued that Article 8 of the Partnership for Peace Framework Agreement said that NATO will consult with any Partner that perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security. Noting that this article does not specify the level of

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consultations, he argued that a meeting with the MC was appropriate.

¶12. (C/NF) The DCMC briefed the Council on President Medvedev's August 12 announcement of the halt to military operations and confirmed that Georgian troops had pulled out of the Kodori Gorge. He said NATO is still assessing the battle damage and appealed to Allies to share intelligence with NATO authorities, in particular imagery. He reported that Russia had targeted strategically important sites within Georgia over the past several days, noting several military installations that had been hit, including the radar facility that was to host the NATO ASCE. In response to the Czech PermRep, the DCMC said there are indeed procedures for an MC to meet with partners, though it has never been exercised outside of a pre-planned NATO dialogue. (Note: MC 1 meetings have apparently only taken place within the context of NRC and NUC meetings.) He said that before any such meeting with Georgia should be scheduled, the MC should be given political guidance on the meeting. DCMC noted he would be meeting personally with the Georgian Military Representative that afternoon.

¶13. (C/NF) Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Latvia and Poland supported the Czech Perm Rep's comments and stressed the need to respond quickly to Georgia's request for assistance. The Estonian Perm Rep said some of Georgia's requests could be fulfilled without much effort and that a meeting on the Military Committee with Georgia would give the Georgians the opportunity to explain the rationale behind their requests. He suggested that separatists from Abkhazia and South Ossetia may be taking advantage of the cease-fire, and that Russia (as a party to the conflict) should be held responsible for such violations. The Latvian Perm Rep stressed Russian strikes on Georgian radar facilities had left the Georgians operating blindly, and that the Georgian request for NATO AWACs assets would be very useful for Georgia. Poland suggested NATO send a delegation to Tbilisi in advance of the August 19 NATO Foreign Ministers meeting, which could then brief the Ministers on the situation on the ground.

¶14. (C/NF) The German Perm Rep said the Political Committee had only met once to discuss the Georgian requests and should be allowed to continue its work. He said the situation was evolving and suggested NATO take a step back and go through the eight Georgian requests carefully. France provided a readout of Sarkozy's peace-mediation efforts, saying that his six principles would likely be reflected in the 27 EU Foreign Minister's conclusions. He questioned the usefulness of a statement for the August 19 FM meeting and said he could not support an MC 1 without knowing the political context.

¶15. (C) Ambassador Volker said that Georgian forces had been decimated and Russia is also occupying undisputed Georgian territory. Now, NATO needed to stand for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and it owed Georgia a reply on its requests for assistance, which should be as positive as possible. He proposed work continue on the draft NATO statement, which could be issued at the August 19 Ministerial. The UK expressed support for the U.S. comments, and said the Ministerial could provide a useful deadline to formulate a response to Georgia. Canada opined that a strong NAC Ministerial statement would reinforce the cease-fire agreement.

¶16. (C/NF) Responding to a question from the Dutch PermRep, DCMC said he could not confirm that non-military targets were hit. He said he could not certify the safety of sea and air routes, which could affect the provision of humanitarian aid, and repeated the call for nation's to share intelligence. Regarding Georgia's request for NATO AWACS, DCMC said that two AWACS could be deployed to the region and be operating within 48 hours, assuming agreement for basing by a host country. This would give NATO its own intelligence capability and increase combined intelligence resources in the aggregate.

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¶17. (C) Budapest Defense Ministerial: The D/SYG recalled the SYG had proposed that the October 9-10 NATO Defense Ministerial in Budapest include the usual NAC meeting on operation and transformation, as well as a meeting in ISAF format and a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). The SYG had not proposed a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) since there would be a high-level meeting of the NUC November 12-13. France, Germany, and Norway supported the proposal, while many nations said they would need to reconsider the NRC and also wanted to consider holding a NUC, given events in Georgia. The D/SYG said noted there was consensus on the formats, with the exception of the NRC and NUC meetings, which the Council would discuss again at its meeting on August 20.

¶18. (C) Mauritania: The D/SYG mentioned the August 6 military coup in Mauritania, pointing to the NATO spokesman's statement of concern and urging for a return to democracy and rule of law. D/SYG gave a readout of his meeting with the Mauritanian Ambassador to Belgium on August 11, where he urged the Ambassador's government to respect democratic institutions and informed the Ambassador that future NATO-Mauritanian cooperation (which had recently been improving) could become very difficult. The Ambassador said the coup resulted from a standoff between the President and Parliament which necessitated military intervention, and said that a general election would be held in the near future (though he could not provide a date). The SYG said the Working Group for the Mediterranean Dialogue would meet on August 29 to discuss the situation in Mauritania, after which the NAC would have to make a decision on cooperation with Mauritania as a Med-D partner.

VOLKER